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Pakistan

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Introduction

1. The Government of Pakistan is honoured to present its Third Universal Periodic Review Report to share progress made by Pakistan in the human rights field from 2012 to 2017 in a spirit of dialogue and constructive engagement with the international community. The report covers developments since the previous review, update on the status of implementation of accepted recommendations, challenges as well as national priorities and commitments for the promotion and protection of human rights.

2. Pakistan's commitment to human rights emanates in the first place from its Constitution and duty towards its people. We are determined to ensure that every Pakistani citizen lives in equality, dignity and freedom. The words of the Founding Father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, are the guiding principle of our policy, "We are equal citizens of one State". Therefore, the Government attaches high priority to advancing the mutually reinforcing objectives of development, human rights and democracy and there is a strong and unequivocal political commitment in this regard.

I. Methodology and consultation process

3. The report has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines for the preparation of information under the universal periodic review, decision 17/119. The report has been prepared by Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with Ministry of Human Rights.

4. The report is the outcome of a broad-based, inclusive and participatory consultation process in which all stakeholders were involved. The Ministry of Human Rights disseminated the recommendations received amongst all relevant federal and provincial stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and mass media. A systematic and institutionalized process was followed in soliciting information. Matrices were designed and circulated among key line Federal Ministries and Provincial Departments as well as Treaty Implementation Cells (TICs) for implementation. National and Provincial consultative meetings were also arranged at Islamabad and provincial headquarters with the participation of the government officials and CSOs for seeking their input, and finalization of responses.

II. Legal, policy and institutional developments

5. A wide-range of legal, policy and institutional developments took place during the period from 2012 to 2017 details of which are given in response to accepted recommendations. During the period, a number of laws were passed by the Parliament as well as by the provincial assemblies to strengthen human rights (see Annex-I).

6. Within the governance structure of Pakistan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas – FATA- is under the administrative control of federal government. In order to mainstream FATA into national ambit, the Federal Cabinet has recently formulated ten-year socio-economic development plan of FATA which includes, inter alia, repeal of Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR), establishment of branches of superior judiciary and merger of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. It will bring FATA into national fold and thereby will enable population of 4.4 million of tribal areas to enjoy fundamental rights enshrined in the constitutional and legal framework of Pakistan.

7. Vision 2025 is considered to be foundation for change and transformation which seeks to provide the social, legal and physical infrastructure needed to empower people and

ensure that they are able to live their lives with dignity. It focuses on ending discriminations and provides an enabling environment to all citizens of Pakistan to develop their full potential and share the benefits of economic growth, prosperity and social development.

8. The 11th Five-year Plan is another comprehensive document that sets out guiding principles and implementation strategies for national human rights development.

9. Pakistan is amongst the top ten countries in the world most adversely affected by climate change and related natural disasters. In addition to National Climate Change Policy, 2012 and its framework for implementation, Climate Change Act, 2017 has been adopted under which Pakistan Climate Change Council, Pakistan Climate Change Authority and Pakistan Climate Change Fund are being established. The Government has launched 'Green Pakistan Programme' whereby over 100 million trees will be planted in the country over the next 5 years. National forest policy, which sets out plans for mass tree planting, curbing deforestation and promoting conservation has also been formulated which envisages increasing the forest cover from 5% to 9% in the next 15 years.

10. The Government has developed National Sanitation Policy, National Drinking Water Policy, and Clean Development Mechanism to support inclusive development. The Government is also promoting right to development for it believes that real prosperity is shared prosperity. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a manifestation of international cooperation for the realization of right to development.

11. In addition to women, children, persons with disabilities and minorities, a number of policy measures have been taken for safeguarding rights of older persons, including establishment of Pakistan National Center on Aging and old homes in all provinces, adoption of the Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Welfare Bill 2013, KP Senior Citizen Act, 2014 and consideration of Punjab Senior Citizens Ordinance, 2013 and Sindh Senior Citizens Welfare Bill, 2014 by the respective provincial assemblies. Employees Old Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) provides monetary benefits to old age workers through various programmes. During the period 1st July, 2016 to 31st March, 2017, an amount of Rs. 17,921.7 million has been disbursed to 405,460 beneficiaries.

12. For the first time ever, the rights of Intersex and transgender persons have been recognized. In a judgment, the Supreme Court directed the National Database Regulatory Authority to issue national identity cards and passports to the transgender persons. The issue of transgender is being discussed at different forums which include Senate's Special Committee on Marginalized Segments of Society, Senate's Functional Committee on Human Rights and National Council for Social Welfare and Capital Administration and Development Division.

13. Transgender and Intersex Persons (Promotion and Protection of Rights) Bill, 2017 is under consideration. KP Government has allocated a special fund of Rs200 million for the welfare of transgender community in budget of 2016/2017 for the first time. The other provinces are also devising practical measures for protection of rights of transgender persons.

III. Consolidating democracy (recommendations 76, 77 and 120)

14. On 11 May 2013, there was a smooth transition from one democratically elected Government to another. The elections were observed by hundreds of international observers and were considered free and fair which further consolidated democracy. In order to strengthen democratic culture in the country, further electoral reforms are being introduced and Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is being strengthened. Parliamentary

Committee on Electoral Reforms was established in July, 2014. The reforms package developed by the Committee is under consideration by the National Assembly of Pakistan.

A. Strengthening of Election Commission of Pakistan

15. ECP has been strengthened through a series of reforms and schemes. Through 22nd Constitutional Amendment, ECP has been empowered. Electoral reforms to encourage women to contest in general elections are being introduced by the ECP. ECP has also succeeded in securing 5% quota for women in the allocation of party tickets by all political parties.

16. To make the electoral process more inclusive so that all citizens can exercise their right to vote, Election Commission of Pakistan has taken initiatives, including, among others, inclusive voter education especially at the grass root level for ensuring the participation of women and persons with disabilities; establishment of Federal Election Academy; review of existing guidelines for polling staff for effective recording of gender disaggregated results in forms; recruitment of more women in ECP staff; reducing the voter turnout gaps between men and women through 124 District Voter Education Committees at District level, encouraging women, persons with disabilities and youth as first time voters to register as voters; to create awareness for communities to cast vote; celebration of national voter's day on 7 December; gender sensitization sessions and surveys of polling stations to make them accessible to persons with disabilities.

B. Local government elections

17. To strengthen participatory democracy, the subject of local government has been transferred from center to the provinces and responsibility of conducting elections was entrusted to the Election Commission in line with insertion of Article 140A in the Constitution of Pakistan through Eighteen Amendment-2010. The process of conducting local government elections has been completed recently in all provinces of Pakistan. The local governance system has empowered masses at the grassroots level.

IV. Strengthening human rights institutions (recommendations 16, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52 and 55)

18. The Government has set up comprehensive institutional mechanisms to ensure implementation of laws and policies and to take concrete action for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

A. Ministry of Human Rights

19. In November 2015, the Human Rights Wing of Ministry of Law and Justice was separated and was set up as a Ministry with the view to mainstream human rights in the country. It has a wide mandate and currently it has four Regional Offices. It has been allocated an amount of Rs. 1064.91 million during 2012-16 and Rs. 861.84 million has been utilized so far. A Helpline for Legal Advice on Human Rights Violations (1099) is functioning under the Ministry. More than 25,000 Calls have been received during the last year, out of which 2648 cases have been referred to concerned departments for redressal. It is also operating Women in Distress and Detention Fund (for financial and legal assistance to women), Diyat, Arsh and Daman Fund (for financial assistance to convicts) and Human

Rights Relief and Revolving Fund (Rs. 5.8 million dispersed among 459 victims of human rights violations in the last 3 years).

B. Provincial Human Rights Departments

20. All provinces have separate Human Rights Departments which are mandated to coordinate with public and private sector institutions as well as CSOs to promote human rights, to gather information, prepare fact finding reports on complaints and allegations of human rights violations and conduct inspections and visits. There are Human Rights Committees at District levels which can take up complaints and monitor human rights situation.

C. Parliamentary Committees on human rights

21. The Senate and National Assembly's Standing Committees on human rights provide oversight mechanism on public policy, monitor the human rights situation, receive complaints on human rights violations, conduct inquiries and make recommendations. These Committees have played an instrumental role in smooth adoption of various laws relating to human rights.

D. Human Rights Cells at Courts

22. In 2013, Human Rights Cells were expanded with a broader mandate and staff to provide an expeditious and inexpensive remedy in matters relating to infringements of fundamental rights. In addition, a separate Wing in the Human Rights Cell of the Supreme Court has been established to address violations of rights of overseas Pakistanis.

E. National Commission on Human Rights

23. A National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) has been established by an Act of the Parliament in 2012 and made functional since May 2015. It includes a Chairperson, who is a former Judge of the Superior Judiciary, and consists of nine members, i.e., one from each province, FATA, Islamabad Capital Territory and minority communities. The Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) is also its ex-officio member. The Commission has been given suo moto powers to take action against cases of all human rights violations in the country. The Act gives the Commission powers to hold inquiries and investigations with regard to violation of human rights anywhere in Pakistan.

24. In accordance with the Paris Principles, the Commission has been made financially independent. Government approved supplementary grant of Rs. 100 million for establishment of NCHR Fund. Moreover, 171 posts have also been created. Further, NCHR Complaint Rules, 2015 have been notified which elaborate the procedure regarding evaluation and disposal of complaints. The provinces are also in the process of establishing provincial commissions for human rights. For instance, Government of Sindh has set up the Sindh Human Rights Commission in 2013.

F. National and Provincial Commissions on Status of Women

25. NCSW was strengthened and granted financial and administrative autonomy under NCSW Act, 2012. Its mandate includes review of legislative, policy, institutional and

administrative mechanisms established to protect rights of women. During the financial year (FY) 2016-2017, NCSW was allocated Rs. 45 million. Sindh, KPK and Punjab have also set up Provincial Commissions for the Status of Women. The Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women Bill, 2017 is also under consideration. In addition, an Inter Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) comprising of Ministers for Women Development, Secretaries of Provincial Women Development Departments, Chairperson NCSW and Ministry of Human Rights was constituted to meet and to agree on key priorities for gender equality in line with our international commitments.

G. National Commission on the rights of children

26. The National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD) coordinates, monitors and facilitates implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. National Commission on the Rights of Children Bill, 2017 has been approved by the National Assembly. The Commission aims to promote, protect and monitor rights of children.

H. Strengthening of National Commission for Minorities

27. On 16 July 2014, the Terms of Reference of National Commission for Minorities (NCM) were revised with the view to make it more effective. Measures include, among others, development of national interfaith harmony policy, taking stock of discriminatory practices against minorities, ensuring participation of minorities in all spheres of national life, redressal of grievances of minorities and preservation and protection of places of worship of all minority communities.

I. National Council for Rights of Persons with Disabilities

28. The National Council for Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been set up with the view to monitor implementation of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and laws and policies relating to rights of persons with disabilities.

J. Offices of the ombudsman

29. Office of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) is functioning since 1983 to provide redress to people. The Ombudsman has headquarters in Islamabad and Regional Offices in major cities. Other ombudsman offices operating in Pakistan include Provincial Ombudsman offices in Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh and KP. For instance, Ombudsman Punjab received a total of 24,637 complaints and 21,530 complaints were disposed off in 2016. Similarly, out of 1617 complaints, Ombudsman KP disposed off 1199 complaints during 2016. A banking ombudsman, the Banking Mohtasib Pakistan, a Federal Insurance Ombudsman and a Federal Tax Ombudsman and Federal Ombudsperson for Protection of Women against Harassment at Workplace are also functioning at federal and provincial levels.

30. National Children Committee (NCC) is working under the umbrella of Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan which has appointed children commissioners in all the four provinces and Islamabad to protect children's fundamental rights and to provide them enabling environment for their development. The children commissioners have power to take suo moto notice on the state of children.

V. Adoption of National Action Plan on Human Rights (recommendations 66 and 73)

31. After extensive consultations with all stakeholders including the civil society, Pakistan has launched the historic National Action Plan on Human Rights in February 2016. The comprehensive plan consists of six thematic areas with 16 expected outcomes and 60 actions. The six thematic areas which cover all human rights dimensions include: (I) Policy, Legal Reforms; (ii) Access to justice; (iii) Implement key human rights priorities; (iv) International/UN Treaty implementation; (v) Establish and strengthen national human rights institutions; and (vi) Implementation and monitoring mechanism for the Action Plan.

32. The Action Plan envisages activities at both the Federal and Provincial levels in collaboration with Federal Ministries and Provincial Departments. An amount of Rs. 750 million has been allocated to support implementation of the Action Plan, which includes Rs. 400 million for human rights education, sensitization, awareness raising, research and communication, Rs. 250 million for establishment of a Human Rights Institute, and a Rs. 100 million Endowment Fund for free legal assistance for poor victims of human rights violations. A National Task Force under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Human Rights with the representation of Federal Ministries and Provincial Law/Human Rights Departments is overseeing and monitoring implementation of the Action Plan. The Action Plan will play a central role in setting our strategic direction and key priorities, and will align our interventions with our national and international obligations.

33. Ministry of Human Rights has formulated a draft National Policy Framework for promotion and protection of human rights after completing the consultative process at federal and provincial level. The draft has been circulated among Ministries/Divisions for final consultation/input before submission to Federal Cabinet for its approval. Formulation of provincial strategies on human rights is also in process in collaboration with Provincial Governments.

VI. Promoting international cooperation and implementing Pakistan's international human rights obligations (recommendations 17, 18, 50, 62, 70 and 77)

34. Pakistan has ratified and continues to implement seven core international human rights treaties and two optional protocols. Pakistan ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict in November 2016. We are focused on the implementation of these instruments at all levels. To achieve this objective, the Government has established Treaty Implementation Cells at Federal and Provincial levels to oversee compliance with these international instruments. A Module for capacity building of officials of the Federal and Provincial Governments about ratified human rights conventions has been prepared and so far 4 training workshops have been held.

35. Pakistan continues to regularly report to the relevant Treaty Bodies on the implementation of these conventions. Recently, Pakistan's Fifth Periodic Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (May 2016), 21st–23rd Periodic Report on the implementation of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (August 2016), initial reports on Convention against Torture (April 2017), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (June 2017) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (July 2017) were reviewed. In addition, A Law Reforms Committee has been constituted under the directive of the Prime Minister of Pakistan which is chaired by the Minister for Law and Justice, which convenes

regular meetings with different stake holders in order to reform and review the existing laws and also to bring other laws in strict conformity with the provisions of the Constitution and our international obligations.

36. At the international level, we continue to constructively engage with the UN human rights mechanisms. Pakistan is also working closely with Special Procedures of HRC. Special Rapporteur on the independence of Judges and Lawyers visited Pakistan from 19–29 May 2012, Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances from 10–12 September 2012, and Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism from 11–13 March 2013. The High Commissioner for Human Rights also visited Pakistan from 4–8 June 2012. These visits have been useful for us in terms of feedback and are reflective of our commitment for the promotion and protection of human rights. These visits were part of our undertaking to enhance our cooperation in the field of human rights with OHCHR. We have also decided to extend invitations to the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, to visit Pakistan on mutually convenient dates.

VII. Human rights education and training and awareness raising (recommendations 63, 64, 65, 69, 94, 97 and 152)

37. Human Rights education, training and awareness raising plays an instrumental role in promoting respect for and observance of human rights. An amount of Rs. 250 million has exclusively been allocated for establishment of National Institute of Human Rights. It is a training, research and capacity building institute which aims to build capacity of duty bearers involved in human rights protection in particular and progressive realization of human rights in general. The establishment of the institution is under process.

38. The Ministry of Human Rights has initiated Public Awareness Campaign on Human Rights Education and Sensitization under Action Plan for Human Rights, 2016 through Seminars and media campaigns. In this regard, the following activities have been undertaken:

- 60 Seminars have been organized in various Universities during 2015–16 and 2016–2017.
- Conducting of 12 capacity-building workshops for prosecutors and court official on rights of women.
- 3 Day Public Awareness Campaign on Pakistan Radio Network, PTV and ATV has been launched for awareness raising among general masses.
- 6 Day Public Awareness Campaign has been launched on print media through publishing half page/quarter page advertisements.
- Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Material on Human Rights Issues" has been developed as part of Public Awareness Program.
- Universal Children Day (20th November) International Human Rights Day (10th December) and International Women's Day (08th March) are also celebrated as regular features in order to create awareness among the masses.
- Human rights education has been introduced in training institutions of law enforcement agencies and judiciary, and is being gradually introduced in all academic institutions.

VIII. Economic, social and cultural rights

A. Implementing MDGs-SDGs (recommendations 57, 142, 161 and 162)

39. On 19th February, 2016, Pakistan became the first country in the world whose National Assembly passed a unanimous Resolution adopting the 2030 Agenda as its own national development agenda reflecting broad political support for it. The pillars of Vision 2025 are aligned with SDGs. SDG's Secretariat has been set up in the National Assembly and a parliamentary SDG's Task Force has been formed to ensure integration of SDG's in policies and Laws.

B. Right to education (recommendations 36, 68, 72, 83, 88, 131, 135, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150 and 153)

40. Under Article 25-A of the constitution, provision of free and compulsory education to all the children of age 5 to 16 is declared as a fundamental right. The provincial governments have passed legislations to ensure implementation of article 25-A. Pakistan is committed to achieve SDGs related to education and is committed to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, and quality primary and secondary education by 2030. A large number of initiatives have been launched by the Federal and Provincial Governments:

- The National Plan of Action has been prepared by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training through an extensive Consultation with the Education Departments of Provinces/Areas, and with the technical cooperation of UNESCO and UNICEF.
- Pakistan's education budget has been increasing and has gone up by an average of 17.5% every year since 2010. It was doubled from $3.5 billion in 2010–11 to $7.5 billion in 2016–17. The provinces have allocated 17% to 24% of their budgets for education in 2016–17.
- Basic Education Community Schools (BECS) and National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) have opened about 20 thousand feeder schools to provide education in remote and difficult areas of Pakistan.
- Waseela-e-Taleem (WeT) is designed to encourage BISP beneficiary families having children in the age group of 5 to 12 years, to send their out of school children to schools for primary education in return for cash transfers. This involves a cash transfer of Rs. 250 per month paid quarterly (Rs. 750 per child) for all children of each beneficiary family in the age bracket of 5–12 years in return for their compliance with the co-responsibilities of school admission and a minimum of 70 percent quarterly attendance. So far, over 1.3 million children have been enrolled and Rs. 2.9 billion has been disbursed as stipend under WeT.
- Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) operates a network of 6500 partner schools and runs a Free Voucher Scheme to provide scholarships for students in private schools.
- Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme, during FY 2013-14, distributed stipends worth Rs.1.5 billion among 411,000 girls in 16 districts of Punjab.
- KP during fiscal year 2015–16, disbursed funds among 465,000 girl students. Free textbooks costing Rs. 2.05 billion were distributed among 5,415,662 students. Three thousands scholarships were given to girls' students of Torghar and Kohistan districts. Stoori Da Pakhtunkhwa Scholarships were awarded to 1,226 students of Secondary and Higher Secondary School.

- Sindh has also built 3,500 classrooms and provided about 5000 missing facilities in different schools. Government of Sindh also disbursed 7.5 million text books from class 1–12 and provided stipend to 420,000 Girls and amount was increased from Rs.1000 to Rs. 2500 and Rs 2400 to Rs.3500 for girls.
- Balochistan Education Department has reconstructed educational facilities and provided missing facilities instead of focusing only on building new schools.
- National Curriculum Council is reviewing the Curriculum of 2006 to update the curriculum and include cross cutting themes in the curriculum such as tolerance, human rights, civic education and democracy etc. Curriculum reforms have been introduced for school textbooks by provinces. For instance, curriculum in Punjab is being reviewed and revised systematically by including human rights education.

C. Right to adequate housing (recommendation 163)

41. Due to growing population, Pakistan has been facing the shortage of housing units. As an initial step, House Building Finance Corporation (HBFC) and Pakistan and Provincial Housing Authorities (PHA) were given target of constructing apartments at affordable price for low and middle-income groups. The PHA has so far undertaken 18 projects involving 4,476 housing units in four major cities including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar.

42. Government of the Punjab launched Aashiyana Housing Scheme for poor, widows, workers, and farmers at low cost. The Government of Baluchistan has also earmarked a piece of land for a housing scheme for Christian community. NASAPA Flats and High-Rise Flats, Housing Schemes at Jalozai, Mullazai, Jerma, Havelian and establishment of model towns in different districts of KP are underway to provide affordable housing to the citizens. Government of Sindh has not only started its own housing schemes but has also prepared lists of Registered Cooperative Societies. The achievements could have been much more, had it not been for the 2010 great flood which destroyed nearly 20 million homes.

D. Right to work (recommendations 58, 74, 88, 128, 129 and 163)

43. The Government is committed towards ensuring full and productive employment with the view to promote decent employment opportunities and human resource development. In this context:

- The government has made adequate allocation under Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) for provinces and less developed areas for increasing pace of development and progress. The present allocation of Rs 1000 billion under PSDP is the highest ever in the country's history which would lead to job growth.
- Under CPEC, special economic zones and new economic cities are being developed creating livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities for the people of Pakistan.
- SME Banks have disbursed loans amounting to Rs. 59,936,092,228 million on easy installments. As a result, 3,231,022 persons have benefited.
- Under the auspices of President's Rozgar Scheme, National Bank of Pakistan has offered an average amount of Rs. 100,000 to the unemployed and poor people for a period of five years.

- National Internship Program (NIP) hires educated youth as paid interns in the public sector organizations. During the last three years, NIP has offered internships to more than 85,000 young people.
- Government has allocated Rs. 5 billion during 2013-14 under Prime Minister's Business Loan Scheme which focuses on young entrepreneurs between the age group of 21 - 45 years to start new business. 8661 loans amounting to Rs. 8.24 billion have been disbursed under this program. 50% of loans are earmarked specifically for women.
- PM's Interest Free Loans Scheme is a micro-finance facility. Average loan size is Rs. 21,996 and total amount of Rs. 5.04 million has been disbursed.
- Under PM's Youth Skill Development Programme 50,000 individuals have already received training while another batch of 25,000 is currently undergoing training.
- PM's Fee Re-Imbursement Scheme aims to provide finance through tuition fees paid directly to universities from which Almost 150,000 students have benefited.

E. Bonded labour (recommendation 60)

44. Pakistan is fully committed to abolition of any form of bonded labour or slavery. We have ratified ILO Conventions No. 29 and No. 105, and have prohibited bonded labor with a fairly strong Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act of 1992 (BLASA). The Act also establishes a "District Vigilance Committee System" to promote enforcement nationwide by monitoring and identifying instances of bonded labour. All provinces have enacted their respective laws to deal with the menace of bonded labour and inspections are carried out regularly. For instance, 9000 inspections were carried out in 2016 and 850 FIRs were lodged in cases involving child labour in the province of Punjab alone.

45. Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) has developed a National Framework to address child Labour and Bonded Labour- which includes actions on improving legislation and enforcement. The Ministry of OP&HRD is also developing a 'Labour Protection framework' including a time-bound Action Plan-covering seven areas. ILO country office will support the Ministry of OP&HRD and Provincial Department of Labour to initiate and "Information campaign" on eight core labour standards including child and Bonded Labour.

F. Right to health (recommendations 68, 92, 131, 136, 137, 138, 139, 161 and 162)

46. The Government is fully committed to providing better health service to its citizens. Provinces have allocated a large part of their resources in improving the health sector with a particular focus on women and children.

- The National Health Vision 2016-25 aims to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Pakistan resulting in a fairer, more efficient health financing that pools risk and shares healthcare costs equitably across the population.
- Prime Minister's National Health Program has a focus on population below poverty line ($ 2 per day). A total of about 100 million people will benefit from it. Services have been started in 15 districts covering 3.1 million families approximately.
- Family Planning and Primary Health Care, Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI), Malaria Control Program, Tuberculosis Control Program, HIV/ Aids Program, Maternal and Child Health Program, Universal Salt Iodization Program

and Prime Minister's Program for prevention and control of Hepatitis in Pakistan aims to improve health indicators.

- The Government has launched a program to improve Maternal and Neonatal health service for all, particularly the poor and the disadvantaged at all levels of health care delivery system. It aims to provide improved access to high quality Mother and Child health and Family Planning services, has trained 10,000 community midwives, made provision of comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC) services in 275 hospitals / health facilities, made provision of basic EmONC services in 550 health facilities and family planning services in all health outlets. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Under Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) has been reduced from 74 and 92 per thousand to 66 and 81 per thousand respectively, a reduction of 10%.
- The Government of KPK has merged various projects and programs in to Integrated Health Project (IHP). Sehat ka Insaf Card programme, at the total cost of Rs.5362.2 million, covers 50 per cent of the population of KP including 1.8 million households.
- Family Welfare Centers and Reproductive Health Services A Canters (RHS-A) promote and deliver family planning services in the urban and rural areas of Sindh and Punjab. Government of sindh has developed Costed Implementation Plan (CIP) and allocated additional Rs. 890 million to accelerate family planning activities in ten districts.
- Medicine Pricing Policy has developed to ensure affordable prices of quality medicines.

G. Right to food (recommendations 129, 130 and 161)

47. In Pakistan concerted efforts are being made to ensure food security through a number of policy initiatives, including, among others, establishment of Ministry of National Food Security & Research, introduction of social-safety-nets and poverty reduction programs, provision of agricultural subsidies and setting up of Pakistan Agriculture and Research Council to achieve sustainable production in agriculture for food security. The federal government has also established National Food Security Commission (NFSC) a step forward to develop a national policy for the long-term sustainability of food security and agriculture development, which is being chaired by the Prime Minister.

48. Pakistan joined global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative in 2013 and subsequently established a national Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) secretariat in Planning and Development Division. Governments of all provinces have also established SUN secretariat in the Planning and Development Departments of their respective provinces. MNFSR is developing Zero Hunger Programme in collaboration with World Food Program to improve the food security situation in the targeted districts of Pakistan. In 2015, a national Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) strategy was developed and endorsed with UNICEF support.

49. All provinces have developed Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Strategies. Under Punjab Food Support Scheme, government of Punjab has been giving Rs. 1,000 per household to enable deserving people meet their food needs. Up till now, it has benefited one million poor people. In KP Health Integrated Reforms Program having 4th component as nutrition at a cost of Rs 20 million out of Rs 14.11 billion is implemented. In Baloschistan Nutrition Program for Mother& Children has been initiated in 7 districts. In Sindh "Nutrition Support Program" and "Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture" project has been launched for three districts at a cost of Rs. 582.00 million.

II. Social security and poverty alleviation (recommendations 36, 74, 87, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 160 and 164)

50. Realizing that human rights cannot be enjoyed without the fulfillment of human needs, the Government is fully committed to eradicate poverty. Pakistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), comprises of nine pillars with the aim to reduce poverty. In this context:

- Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) acts as an Apex Organization carrying out programmes through 134 partner organizations. It supports the government's social protection programme by providing poverty graduation approach for the poorest household in over 1,600 union councils in the country. Since 2000 to March 2017, PPAF has disbursed an amount of Rs. 184.94 billion in 130 districts.
- National, Punjab, Sindh and Thardeep Rural Support Program (NRSP) mandates to alleviate poverty by harnessing people's potential and undertake development activities in 56 Districts in provinces. An amount of Rs. 13,137,900 million has been disbursed from July 2016 to December 2016 among 921,558 active borrowers.
- Under Punjab Chief Minister's Green Tractor Scheme, 10 thousand tractors and subsidy of two lakh rupees have been provided to men and women farmers during the last four years. The Government of Sindh also launched Benazir Tractor Scheme program for farmers.
- Zakat system plays an important role in poverty alleviation and is utilized for assistance to the needy, indigent, poor, orphans, widows and persons with disabilities. A total amount of Rs. 7570.910 million has been distributed amongst the provinces and other administrative areas in FY 2017.
- Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) is making a significant contribution towards provision of social security and reduction in poverty. During July 2016 to March 2017, PBM has disbursed an amount of Rs. 2183 million through its core projects/ schemes.
- Child Support Programme (CSP) is the country's first ever Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme in which cash incentive is provided to the potential families for sending their children aged 5-16 years to primary schools which is being run in 13 districts countrywide. During July-March 2017, an amount of Rs. 29 million has been disbursed.
- The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) addresses poverty of women in far-flung areas. The program cushions shocks for the vulnerable and redistributes money through cash transfer to female beneficiaries of poor households. At present, the number of beneficiaries are 5.42 million. The budgetary allocation has been increased from Rs. 70 Billion in FY 2012-13 to Rs. 115 billion during 2016-17. The quarterly grant has also been enhanced from Rs. 3000/ family in 2013-14 to Rs 4834/ family in FY 2016-17.

I. Good governance (recommendation 109)

51. The Government is fully committed towards good governance and elimination of corruption from the society. National Accountability Bureau (NAB) is Pakistan's apex agency against corruption to take various measures to eradicate corruption in public sector and to expedite its work to make the responsible involved in corruption accountable. NAB has adopted three pronged strategy i.e. awareness, prevention and enforcement. Public message" Say No to Corruption" is widely circulated among the masses through media campaign. During the last three years, NAB filed more than 150 corruption references

against corrupt persons in respective NAB courts and recovered Rs. 85 billion. Currently, NAB's conviction ratio is 70%.

IX. Civil and political rights

A. Rights of freedom of opinion and expression (recommendations 27 and 29)

92. The Government's strong commitment to the promotion and protection of freedom of expression and opinion is demonstrated by the fact that more than 100 media channels and hundreds of newspapers enjoy complete freedom. They highlight political, social and human rights issues and lead the national debate on issues of public importance, and have been critical of the Government and its policies.

93. In August 2016, Prevention of Electronic Crime Act was adopted by the Parliament with the view to prevent cyber-crimes and protect citizen's rights of freedom of expression and opinion. All the provinces have formulated Right to Access Information Act. The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecom made concerted efforts to provide access to internet to people especially in rural areas. The number of broadband subscribers in Pakistan has risen from just 3 million in 2014 to 42 million in 2017.

B. Freedom of religion or belief (recommendations 27, 112, 125, 126 and 155)

94. The Constitution of Pakistan as well as other laws guarantee freedom of religion and belief. The June 2014 Judgment of Supreme Court reaffirmed that every citizen of the country is free to profess his or her religion. In this regard, Anti Terrorism Courts have sentenced many culprits involved in the offences against religious minorities.

95. Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority ensures that no programme or advertisement shall contain or encourage religious discrimination and extremism. In its efforts to ensure respect of religions and maintain harmony in the society, the Government is taking serious actions against hate speech which could lead to instances of allegations of blasphemy and religious discrimination. For instance, Punjab Sound System (Regulation Act, 2015) is a recent initiative which is being successfully implemented to eliminate the use of loud speakers for incitement. Punjab Vigilance Committee Act, 2016 provides the establishment of vigilance committees at the district and provincial level which are mandated to report any unlawful activity being carried out, or being planned, with respect to incitement. In KP, Commissioners and Police formations have been directed to exhibit zero tolerance to hate speeches and material. 126 FIRs have been lodged and 147 persons have been arrested since 15th December, 2014. Strict action is also being taken in different districts of Balochistan and Sindh.

96. The maintenance and upkeep of religious sites, shrines, temples, churches, etc. is done at government expense. To combat terrorist threats, the Government has enhanced security around places of worship of all communities. For instance, security deployment at religious institutions is being systematically planned and implemented by the Punjab Police. Punjab Security of Vulnerable Establishments Act, 2015, provides security advisory committees at district level to identify vulnerable establishments in the province. Places of worship and other religious sites are covered in this act. Similar efforts are underway in Sindh through Committees at Provincial and District Level. Government of Sindh has installed CCTV cameras in all sensitive Mandirs for protection purposes. Besides,

Provincial Home Departments are providing security to Minorities on different occasions like, Holi, Easter, Good Friday and Sunday prayers.

C. Promotion of interfaith dialogue and cooperation (recommendations 122, 123 and 125)

57. Ministry of Religious Affairs was merged into Ministry of Interfaith Harmony in 2013 now named Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony. This has not only helped in dealing with Muslims and other religious minorities under the same institutional arrangement, but has also facilitated in fostering interfaith and interreligious dialogue and harmony at the grass-roots level. Currently, National Interfaith Harmony Policy is being formulated to promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

58. In order to promote interfaith dialogue and harmony, ten religious festivals of Minorities are celebrated officially in Pakistan. Political leaders, public representatives as well as Muslims take part in these religious festivals. These festivals are widely covered by the print and electronic media. For instance, the President and /or the Prime Minister host special functions in the Presidency/Prime Minister House on these occasions for Christians and Hindus and issue special messages. For instance, the President held a ceremony at the Presidency on Christmas on 24 December 2016 with the participation of the Prime Minister, Minister for Religious Affairs and Minister for Human Rights along with Christian community. Ahead of Christmas in 2016, Minister for Railways also inaugurated a special Christmas Peace Train which travelled across the country. They also at times attend religious ceremonies in Churches, Temples and Gurdwaras. The Prime Minister celebrated Diwali in 2015 and Holi in 2017 along with Hindu community.

59. Realizing the imperative need to promote interfaith dialogue at the grass-roots level, the Government of Pakistan has constituted 124 Interfaith Harmony Committees at the district level with representation of both Muslims and religious minorities. Several conferences have been organized on interfaith harmony. For instance, National Conference on the theme of "Living Together with Diversity: Inter-faith and Inter-Cultural Dialogue" was held from 20–22 February, 2013 in which the Prime Minister and President of Pakistan participated. Several interfaith dialogue organizations have been established by Muslim religious leaders. A number of civil society organizations are also working for the promotion of interfaith dialogue and harmony.

D. Enforced disappearances (recommendations 20, 111, 114 and 115)

60. In order to take effective measures to deal with the issue of enforced disappearances, in April 2010, the Federal Government set up a Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (COIED). The Commission has been vested with broad powers, including the power to register an FIR against whom evidence of involvement in the disappearance of a person is found. The Commission also has powers to order production of a person in respect of whom, it is suspected by the Commission to be held in illegal detention of some Law Enforcement/ Intelligence Agency.

61. The Commission receives cases from Human Rights Cell of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, civil society organizations, National Crisis Management Cell of the Ministry of Interior and directly from the families of the disappeared persons. On the direction of the Supreme Court of Pakistan or on its own, the Commission can file a First Incident Report in the concerned Police Station in cases of missing persons. The Home Secretary of the respective Province is directed to constitute Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) having representatives from the law enforcement agencies as well as Intelligence agencies. The

hearings in each case are held by the Commission at Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and Quetta with the view to facilitate the families of alleged disappeared persons.

62. The Commission is headed by a retired judge of Supreme Court and has two members, i.e., former judge of Sindh High Court and retired Inspector General of Police. Necessary financial resources under a separate head from Ministry of Finance, and staff have also been provided to the Commission. A Sub Office has been established which is working at Karachi since October, 2014. It has been provided adequate resources by the relevant Government Ministries. The Commission, with the sources provided to it, also arranges for parallel hearings of cases at Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi.

63. The government pursues action against perpetrators who have been involved in enforced disappearances. The Commission has been receiving cooperation from all the stakeholders including the Federal/Provincial Government Departments, Intelligence and Law Enforcement Agencies. Consequently, the Commission has been able to dispose of 2416 cases from March, 2011 to 30 November 2016, out of which 1798 persons have been traced as either returned home or confined in jails/ Internment/Rehabilitation Centres on criminal/terrorism charges and the remaining 618 cases were closed either due to non-prosecution or after thorough investigation were found not being cases of enforced disappearances.

E. Administration of justice (recommendations 109 and 116)

64. A number of judicial reforms were introduced through National Judicial Policy (NJP) of 2009. The NJP suggests more than 300 concrete actions promising qualitative and quantitative improvements in justice service delivery that require continuous monitoring and evaluation for effective and sustainable implementation. During the last five years, the NJPMC met more than 19 times and discussed various issues related to administration of justice and took important decision for improving the quality of justice service delivery. While reasonable financial resources are allocated for the judiciary, efforts are underway to further increase budgetary allocations for the judiciary. The process of filling all vacant posts is ongoing, and backlog of cases is being gradually cleared.

65. The Government of Pakistan has established a statutory endowment "Access to Justice Development Fund" to overcome budgetary constraints faced by the judicial and legal sectors. The Law and Justice Commission has formed the District Legal Empowerment Committees (DLECs) and such Committees (DLECs) from July 2013 to June 2016 has been released an amount of RS.21.2 million in 106 districts across the country and out of which Rs.5.140 million have been utilized for provision of free legal aid to the needy and poor litigants. Total of 591 cases have been finalized through Committees (DLECs) across the country including 40 cases of women.

F. Combating terrorism (recommendation 165)

66. Pakistan's counterterrorism efforts are in compliance with its national and international human rights obligations. Terrorists have killed thousands of innocent civilians thus depriving them of their fundamental right to life. Our nation took a collective conscious decision and resolved to eliminate terrorism particularly after the 2014 terrorist killing of 150 school children in Peshawar. A comprehensive strategy, involving forceful law enforcement actions and targeted operations across the country was adopted. Despite external involvement in fomenting terrorism in Pakistan, operations Zarb-e-Azd and Radd-ul-Fasaad continue to produce encouraging results.

67. In December 2014, a National Action Plan to combat terrorism was devised. Eight of the 20 action points of NAP deal with extremism. Specific measures have been introduced, such as the law prohibiting hate speech, strict vigilance over proscribed organizations, and law for preventing abuse of cyberspace by terrorists and extremists and strict regulation for terrorism financing and its implementation.

68. National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was established through NACTA Act 2013 to curb the menace of terrorism from the country. In line with Pakistan National Internal Security Policy 2014-2018, the Government endeavors to maintain stability and a secure law and order environment. The Policy provides for compensation and rehabilitation services to victims of terrorism, especially vulnerable individuals. It also works for capacity building and modernization of all pillars of the criminal justice system.

X. Rights of individuals and vulnerable groups

A. Rights of women (recommendations 21, 23, 25, 26, 35, 36, 40, 41, 51, 53, 61, 67, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 102, 103, 105 and 107)

69. The Government is committed to promote and protect rights of women by promoting their economic and political empowerment and eliminating violence and discrimination against them.

Legal measures

70. In order to curb harmful customary practices and eliminate violence and discrimination against women, a number of laws have been passed in the last few years including, among others, Anti-Rape (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill and Anti-Honour Killings (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill 2016; the Protection of Women from Harassment at Workplace Act 2010; Criminal Law Amendment Act 2011 (Prevention of Acid Crime); Prevention of Anti-Women Practice Act 2011; Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act 2006 and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004.

71. In October 2016, Anti-Rape (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill and Anti-Honour Killings (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill have been passed to tackle the issue of honour killings and to increase rape convictions by reforming existing laws. Under the new laws, relatives of victims would only be able to pardon the killer convicted of capital punishment in cases of honour killings, but the killer would still face a mandatory life sentence of 25 years.

72. The provinces have enacted their own laws for women protection and promotion of their rights which include, inter alia, The KP Elimination of Custom of Ghag Act, 2013.The Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2014, The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016 and The Sindh Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2013.

Measures to eliminate violence and discrimination against women

- National Action Plan for Human Rights focuses on elimination of gender-based violence.
- National Commission on the Status of Women is playing an instrumental role in addressing the issue of violence against women.

- The Gender Crime Cell (GCC) of National Police Bureau gathers collates and analyses data on violence against women.
- To investigate cases of harassment at the workplace, Ombudsman offices at Federal and provincial level in Punjab and Sindh have also been established under the Harassment at the Workplace Act 2010.
- For providing speedy access to justice to women victims, 20 women police stations have been established.
- 26 women crisis centres have been established across the country to provide shelter and legal aid to women victims of violence.
- Draft National Policy on Ending Violence against Women and Girls has been prepared by the Ministry of Human Rights. It outlines prevention, response, protection and rehabilitation mechanism for gender based violence. It also establishes coordination and cooperation mechanisms among the relevant agencies with respect to the cases of gender-based violence.
- Ministry of Human Rights conducted research study which would lead to designing Men Engage Model for the elimination of gender-based violence.

Political and economic empowerment

- National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women 2002 is already in place which aims to mainstream gender in overall development processes.
- The 11th Five Year Plan (2013–18) also focuses on Gender and Women Empowerment. Amount of Rs 2.7 billion has been allocated for women empowerment and their socio-economic development.
- In national assembly 60 seats, in Senate 17 and in provincial assemblies 17% seats are reserved for women. Women also contested the elections on general seats and seats reserved for minorities. Out of 1170 seats in all categories at national and provincial legislatures, 228 are women.
- 30% seats are reserved for electing women representatives at the three tiers of local bodies in line with the Beijing Platform for Action.
- Federal government has reserved 10% quota for women in Central Superior Services. Sindh has recently raised women's jobs quota from 5 % to 15 %. Punjab raised such quota to 15 % in 2013 with grant of 3 years' age relaxation.
- The Government's Decent Work Country Program includes a strategy and a plan of action to promote the creation of decent work with gender equality as a cross-cutting theme.
- In addition to various loans, under the programs launched by Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited, large number of women farmers have been provided loans to avail agri credit schemes for agricultural sector.

B. Rights of children (recommendations 23, 24, 34, 40, 41, 54, 59, 71, 84, 91, 95, 104, 105, 107, 134 and 153)

73. A number of legal, policy as well as institutional measures have been taken for the protection of rights of children, including, among others:

- Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act 2016 criminalizes the child pornography, exposing of children to sexually explicit material, cruelty to children, human trafficking within Pakistan and sexual abuse.
- The Juvenile Justice System Bill, 2017 aims to bring the Juvenile Justice System in conformity with international standards. It focuses on disposal of cases through diversion and social-reintegration of the child offenders.
- The Punjab Restriction on Employment of Children Ordinance, 2016 protects children and adolescents against any form of slavery or practices such as their sale and trafficking, debt bondage, forced or compulsory labour. Punjab Prohibition of Child Labor at Brick Kilins Act, 2016 prohibits and penalizes child labor in the brick kiln sector. KP Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2015 and the Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Act, 2017 bans engagement of children below the age of 14 years in labor.
- South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) is an apex body of the SAARC in which Pakistan plays a leading role in implementation of the agenda and work plan of the SAIEVAC to protect the rights of children.
- In line with the National Policy guidelines for vulnerable groups in disasters 2014, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has established Gender and Child Cell with the aim to mainstream gender and child protection issues and vulnerabilities in humanitarian response, crises management and disaster risk reduction initiatives.
- Federal Investigating Agency (FIA) cracked down, with the help of Police and Rangers, against elements and the organized groups involved in human trafficking. Consequently, in 2014-15, FIA has arrested 46 most wanted criminals and 1236 proclaimed offenders involved in human trafficking especially of children. FIA's 24-Hour Helpline (111-345-786) based in Islamabad was set up to improve reporting of trafficking and encourages survivors to seek rehabilitation services.
- All provinces have enacted child protection laws and have established child protection centers.

C. Rights of persons with disabilities (recommendations 91, 96)

74. As a party to CRPD, the Government has taken a number of initiatives for the enjoyment of the rights and equal participation of persons with disabilities in all walks of life. In this context:

- The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was formulated in 2002, which recognized equality and non-discrimination as key elements.
- Vision 2025 and 11th 5-year plan focuses on rights of persons with disabilities.
- As an affirmative measure, 2 percent quota has been reserved in all academic institutions, as well as for employment in the country for the persons with disabilities.
- The Government of Punjab has not only increased quota from 2 to 3 percent but also launched the first and unique programme, 'Punjab Khidmat Card' to provide interest free loans, free technical training, rehabilitation and welfare and financial assistance to persons with disabilities. For this purpose, a sum of Rs 2 billion has been allocated for the first phase and 200,000 deserving persons with disabilities will benefit from the Programme.

- The Government of Sindh and KP have also introduced various policy initiatives. The Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017 aims to provide better facilities to the persons with disabilities.
- Provincial Special Education Departments have been established under which special academic institutions are functioning across Pakistan.
- Accessible transportation (Metro Bus) has been introduced by the Government for the persons with disabilities. Pakistan International Airlines and Pakistan Railways give 50 % discount on fare for Persons with disabilities and 25% for the Attendants.
- In 2005, a law was passed which encouraged persons with disabilities to join public service. This ensured their participation in decision making at all levels in the public sector. Recently, Lahore High Court, in a landmark judgment of 11 January 2017 struck down the discriminatory provision of Civil Services Rule and allowed persons with disabilities to join all services on the basis of equality.
- At the international level, we have been supportive of disability-inclusive development agenda. We have worked with our partners for a focus by the international community on inclusive education and social inclusion in the 2030 Sustainable-Development Agenda. In order to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities, concerted efforts are being made to introduce an inclusive education system in Pakistan. In this context, a Project for Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities has been introduced in some districts of the country.
- Our teams have participated in Paraolympics and have won medals. They are being trained for participation in a collaborative effort by a group of entrepreneurs and the government.

D. Rights of minorities (recommendations 41, 87, 96, 113, 121, 154, 155, 156, 157 and 158)

75. Pakistan's policy for the protection and promotion of human rights of minorities is in line with the vision of its founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. From time to time, the Government has been taking administrative and policy measures to ensure that minorities enjoy equal rights as equal citizens of Pakistan. Through various measures, the Government has always strived to establish an inclusive society in which people of various faiths can live in harmony. These include:

- Since 2011, Pakistan celebrates 11th August as Minorities Day to promote understanding and harmony among all segments of society. On this day awareness building and inter-religious events are held all over the country which are projected through the media. Keeping up with this tradition, on 11 August 2015, the National Assembly and Senate on the occasion of Minorities Day passed unanimous resolutions expressing resolve to continue to play role for upholding the rights of minorities in Pakistan.
- There are 10 reserved seats for religious minorities in the National Assembly, 4 in the Senate and 23 in the Provincial Assemblies.
- Although the minorities constitute 3 percent of the population, the government has fixed a 5 percent quota of jobs for minorities in all federal services.
- The government has also made special budgetary allocation for grant of scholarships to deserving students from minority communities. Recently, the scholarship grant has been doubled.

- Minorities Affairs Departments are functioning at provincial level and their functions include, inter alia, to refer and recommend investigations and inquiries in case of any violation of minority rights, to formulate policies to foster equality, unity, peace and harmony among all citizens.
- Representation of minorities is assured in the local government institutions. These representatives participate in discussion and decision-making regarding the utilization of local development funds.
- Government has been providing compensation to victims belonging to minority communities. For instance, affectees of Joseph Colony, Lahore (109 persons) were provided financial help of Rs. 500,000/- each on 15 March 2013 and 24 April 2013.
- Pakistan's Independent judiciary and the legal community have taken wide ranging steps for upholding the rule of law and ensuring the protection of constitutional rights of all citizens including religious minorities. As an example, it may be underscored that no sentence of a lower court in blasphemy laws (which are non-discriminatory) has been upheld by the higher courts and no one has been punished under these laws.
- The Supreme Court has actively and successfully pursued cases related to alleged forced conversions of Christians and Hindus and discouraged it. In several cases, suo moto action has been taken by the Supreme Court.
- The landmark legislation, the Hindu Marriage Act, 2017 provides mechanism for the registration of Hindu marriages. Before the law, Hindu women in particular suffered and were unable to claim any legal rights such as inheritance from a deceased husband, re-marrying, divorce, separation or adoption.
- Ministry of Human Rights is also in the process of finalization of the Christian Marriage (Amendment) Bill and Divorce (Amendment) Bill.
- A successful sports festival was arranged by the Ministry of Human Rights on the occasion of Minorities' Day (11th August, 2016) at Islamabad. Its overall objective was awareness raising on Human Rights through sports. The sports festival included various sports competitions. The final event was held at the Sports Complex, Jinnah Stadium, and Islamabad in which around 150000 people participated.
- The Government of Balochistan has taken affirmative action for Minorities in the Province which may in some cases even exceed their proportionate share. The Government of Balochistan has fixed 5% job quota for Minorities. 03 seats of MPAs and 01 seat of MNA are reserved for Minorities against the projected population of minimum 0.227 million. A number of non-Muslims have risen to the higher posts in public offices such as the Justice of High Court of Balochistan.

E. Protection of human rights defenders and journalists(recommendations 75, 101, 110, 117, 118 and 119)

76. The Government considers civil society organizations and human rights defenders as partners in its endeavour to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. By the very nature of their work, human rights defenders face challenges. From time to time, Government has been taking measures to provide them security and an enabling environment to carry out their important work. Whenever their work has been hampered by terrorists and extremists, special investigation teams or joint investigation teams have been formulated and they have been provided legal redress by courts.

77. The terrorists have also been attacking journalists The Government has taken several measures to safeguard them, including:

- Notified a Ministerial Media Security Committee with the mandate to suggest welfare measures to ensure safety of Journalists and Media Persons.
- The Government of Pakistan has initiated a new scheme (Life Insurance Policy for Media Persons) for the welfare of the journalists.
- A Hot Line Number (111-925-225) has been installed in Press Information Department so that journalists can inform the government about any potential threat to them or security related issues.
- Government is cautions of its responsibilities regarding expeditious hearing of cases, of martyred journalists and agrees that the court cases of affected journalists need to be heard by the anti-terror courts for quick decision.
- Proposal for Establishment of Endowment Fund to provide relief to the wounded and disabled journalists who have fallen victims of terrorism in the line of duty.
- Government's draft of Journalist Welfare and Protection bill – 2017 has been sent to Law and Justice Division for legal vetting on22 June 2017 which already has been circulated amongst All Pakistan Newspaper Society, Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors and Pakistan Broadcasters Association for input.
- Ministry of Information has constituted a media security committee to provide protection and safety to the media persons nationwide. Provincial Governments have been taken on board to strengthen this arrangement. Punjab Government has notified all DPOs (SP rank) to be the focal persons to ensure security of media persons.

XI. Challenges

78. In the pursuit of promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Government continues to face challenges, including among others, combating terrorism, resource constraints, capacity building, awareness raising, effective enforcement of laws and policies, protection of vulnerable groups and natural disasters due to climate change, among others.

XII. National priorities and voluntary commitments

79. In order to further consolidate the progress made during recent years as well as to overcome challenges, Pakistan will take bold measures both in policy and legal reform and, where necessary, by undertaking effective enforcement of its existing legislation and policy on human rights in the next four years. Overall, we will further strengthen the holistic approach on human rights with primary focus of future interventions on:

- Implement the National Action Plan for human rights and National Policy Framework on Human Rights;
- To identify gaps in existing legislation, propose new legislation and review enforcement of existing legislation, in consultation with Provincial governments and other relevant stakeholders including civil society;
- Further enhance the operational effectiveness of national human rights institutions in accordance with their mandates through provision of adequate human and financial resources;

- Promotion of human rights education, and training and Capacity building of Government officials and other relevant stakeholders;
- Initiate policy and legal measures to safeguard rights of vulnerable groups;
- Introduce judicial reforms and provide access to justice to all citizens without any discrimination;
- Mainstream human rights in development planning by incorporating cross-cutting issues and promote right to development;
- Continue to submit all periodic reports to treaty bodies in compliance with its treaty obligations, and constructively engage during the reviews; and
- Continue to strengthen cooperation and engagement with the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Procedures.

Conclusion

80. As a democratic and progressive state, Pakistan is firmly resolved to uphold, promote and safeguard universal human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. This is manifested in the high-level political commitment, and policies and programmes of the Government on human rights, and Pakistan's longstanding and continued desire and readiness to work with the international community to strengthen multilateral cooperation and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights. We consider the UPR as a unique cooperative mechanism to identify human rights challenges and to make tangible recommendations in a non-politicized and non-discriminatory manner and we would continue our constructive engagement with this mechanism. With strengthened democracy, independent judiciary, free media and active civil society, Pakistan is confident of continuing the path of further improvement, and promotion and protection of human rights of all its citizens.